

Roosevelt Base, Tennis Courts
(Building No. 221)
Corner of Reeves Avenue and Pennsylvania Street

Long Beach
Los Angeles
California

HABS No. CA-2663-P

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ROOSEVELT BASE, TENNIS COURTS (Building No. 221)

HABS No. CA-2663-P

Location: Corner of Reeves Avenue and Pennsylvania Street, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 11.384680.3735700

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, and architectural style; and for its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

The Tennis Courts complement the original indoor racquet courts found in Building 22. The courts have been resurfaced and refurbished several times over the decades, but they maintain their integrity as an original part of the recreational facilities designed for the Pacific Fleet personnel.

Description: These four lighted tennis courts measure 120' x 224'. They have a concrete foundation, top-surfaced with asphalt, and are painted green with white lines on the in-service playing section and red on the border out-of-play zone. The four courts have nylon nets anchored on metal posts. The courts are walled with a chain link fence, painted green, and covered with a green nylon screen for privacy and as a wind barrier. The courts have six pole lights. Outside of the courts' fences, the east and west sides each have two poles with double-box fluorescent lights. Two poles, with four-box fluorescent light fixtures, are located inside the middle section of the four courts. There are six openings to the tennis courts: one high double swing door on the west side, three single gate doors with metal ring handles on the north side and two of the same on the south side.

Alterations. The tennis courts have been resurfaced a number of times. The chain link fence, nylon screening, and lights are modern additions.

Surroundings. On the north is Reeves Avenue, to the south is a lawn and Building 24, to the east is a parking lot, and to the west is a parking lot and Pennsylvania Street.

Historical Context: The Tennis Courts were built in 1942 as part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro harbor.

The construction of this complex was part of a nation-wide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233), tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), main gates (gate 1), a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion: new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense downsized at the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

Sources:

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California*. Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California*. San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

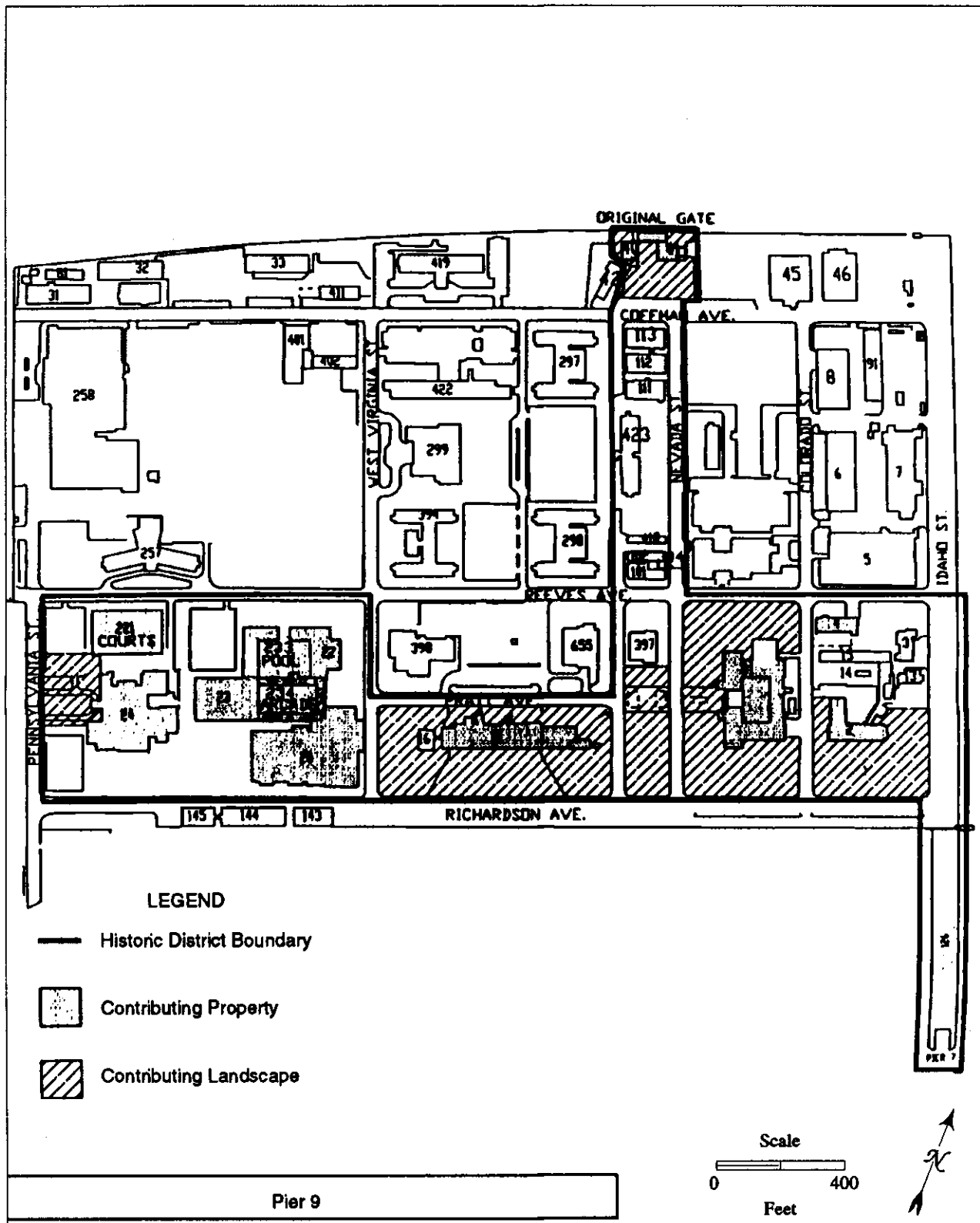
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

Project Information: This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.



ROOSEVELT BASE HISTORIC DISTRICT, TENNIS COURTS